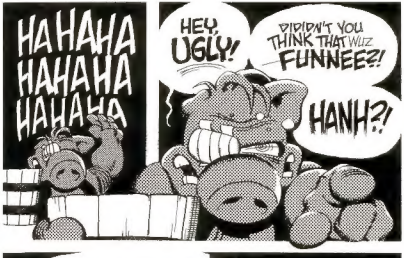
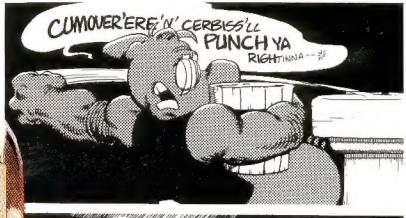
ISSN 0712-7774

$2.25USA • $2.75CANADA • £1.25UK

CEREBUS GUYS

no. 1





201
DEC

SUCCESS!

Once again, PAGE 45 leads the way in the changing marketplace. In a press release dated October 11, owner-proprietors Stephen Holland and Mark Simpson characterized 'INDEPENDENTS DAY '95' — an in-store signing by many of the leading lights in the small press and self-publishing — as 'a runaway success'.

All of the creators in attendance — including Roberta Gregory of *Naughty Bits* and Donna Barr of *Desert Peach* — declared it their most successful signing ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD (caps mine) to date. Sales on Wiley & McKinnon's *Sleaze Castle* for the one day paid the entire printing costs for their second trade paperback (which premiered at the event). After just three months of stocking Jeremy Dennis' *3 in a Bed*, PAGE 45 now accounts for fully 25% of the book's worldwide sales.

Gary Spencer Millidge (whose *Strangehaven* was previewed in *Cerebus* 198) said, "I was genuinely surprised and flattered at the interest in my work, particularly as I'm such a newcomer compared to the other creators present. It was also very nice to be treated so well."

Total sales at PAGE 45 (which have been running ahead of their 'high watermark' sales for Christmas 1994 for the three months leading up to 'INDEPENDENTS DAY '95') surged by a staggering 58%!

Holland and Simpson — like Brian Hibbs of COMIX EXPERIENCE — have found the 'winning formula' for the Brave New World of comics retailing: deemphasis of super-hero comic books (Hibbs did a recent column in *Comics Retailer* in which he attributed a 20% rise in sales to his decision to carry only *The Incredible Hulk* and *X*-titles out of the Marvel line; PAGE 45 confines super-hero comic books to 15% of the store's display space). Combined with personal interaction with the customers, emphasis on small-press and self-published comics stocked IN DEPTH over long periods, and ordering only those books in which the owner-proprietors can take pride in carrying, these stores and a handful of others have blazed a trail into the future of comics retailing.

Clearly the spirit of 'INDEPENDENTS DAY '95' permeated the proceedings well past the closing of the store at 6 p.m. the night of the event. At the après-event party in a local pub, Donna Barr led a tavern-wide, table-banging chorus of:

'LEAD, FOLLOW, OR GET OUT OF THE WAY!!'

Gerhard and I will attend INDEPENDENTS DAY '96 — Saturday, October 26, next year.

***Sleaze Castle* is available from Gratuitous Bunny Comix, 33 Windsor Drive, Cleadon, Tyne & Wear SR6 7SY, United Kingdom.**

***Strangehaven* is available from Gary Spencer Millidge, Abiogenesis Press, P.O. Box 448, Southend-On-Sea, Essex SS1 2FN, United Kingdom (Sim & Sweet 40&5 — overseas retailers please inquire).**

***3 in a Bed* is available from Jeremy Dennis, Alleged Literature, 255b Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7HN, United Kingdom.**

PAGE 45 • 9 Market Street • Nottingham • U.K. • NG1 6HY
Fax (from North America) 011-44-115-9500950

INDEPENDENTS DAY 96

PAGE 45

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1996

Cerebus
NO. 201 DECEMBER 1995

DAVE SIM
Creator, Writer, Characters/ pencil & ink, lettering

GERHARD
Background Artist/pencil & ink, cover colourist, mechanical tones

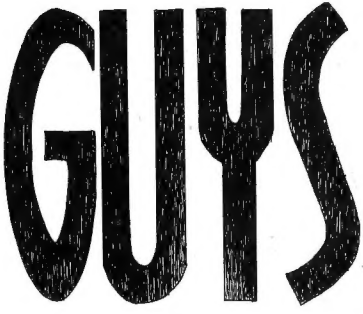
CAROL WEST
Administrative Assistant

LINDA BERZINS
Typesetting

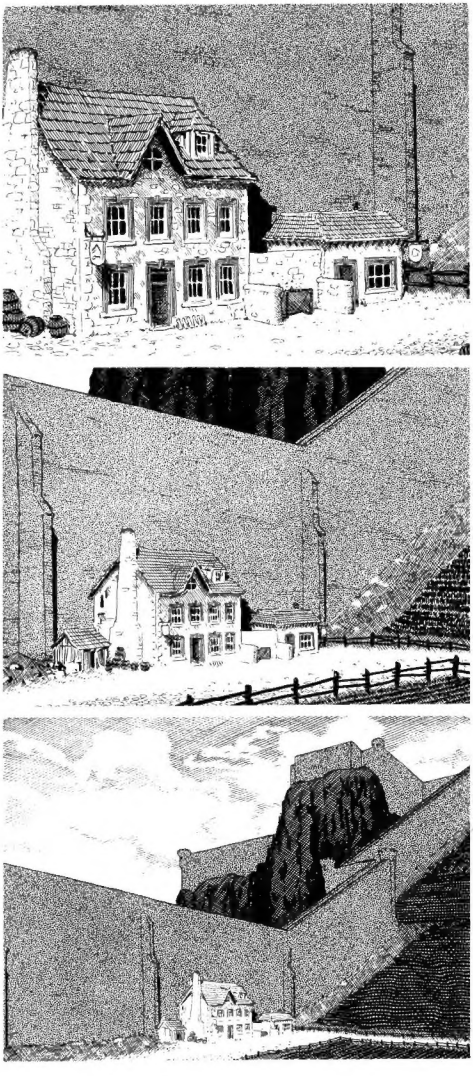
DIANA SCHUTZ
Proofreading

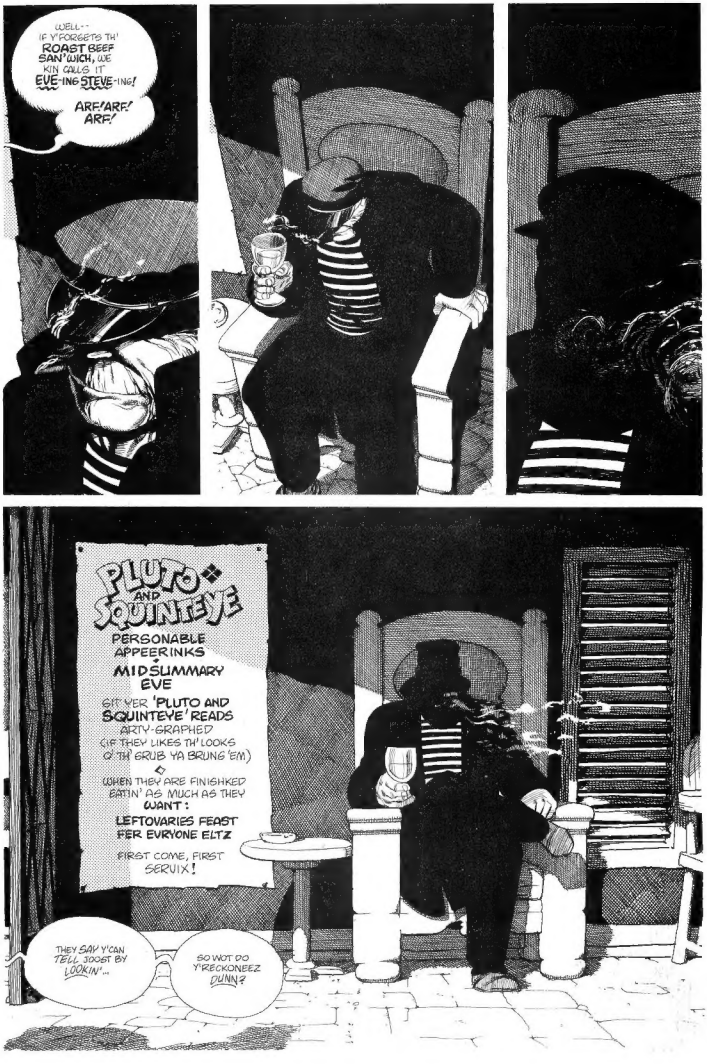
GUYS
a novel
•
(Cerebus 201 to Cerebus 219)

MONTHLY
ALL CONTENTS ©1995 DAVE SIM AND GERHARD
PRINTED IN CANADA by PRENEY PRINT & LITHO, WINDSOR, ONTARIO


GUYS

IT'S LEANIN' TOO FAR T'STARBOARD, RUNT! HAW HAW! WHAT'RE YUH SMOKIN' IN THAT PIPE?!
WHOA!
ARE YOU IN-FLYING I'M SOME SORTA DRUNK ATTIC?
(WE'RE BOTH AS STRAIGHT AS AN ARROW - YOU MUST HAVE SOME KINDA STIGMA-TIZZY, elvis?)
GWGLGLGH
WHAT'RE YOU LADS DOIN'BEE? YUH SIGHNIN' ISN'T FUH NOOTHA FOOR MOONTHS...
IT'S CALLED 'ADVANCING PUB-LISTAKEY'
IT GIVES OUR ADORNING FANS TIME T'GET HITCHED UP WITH LADIES WHAT COOKS GOOD ~~!
SAY, RUNT! THAT REMINDS ME! YUH STILL OWE ME A ROAST BEEF SAN'WICH FROM TH' LAST SIGNING!
(I OWES YUH A BLACK EYE IS WHAT I OWES YUH, ungh!)
WELL?!


I DON'T OWES YUH A THING!
OH! A WELCHER EH?
I YAM TELLIN' YA-- NOBIDDY OWES YA A THING-- EXCEPTIN' MOTHER NATCHERAL! SHE STILL OWES YA A FACE! ARF! ARF! ARF!
POW!
WHOA!
(WHO GOT THE NUMBER O' THAT HAMMERON?)
HAW! HAW! Y'WANT SOME ONION DIP T'GO WITH THAT CAULYFLOWAH EAR, RUNT?!
HEY NOW!
PUT ME DOWN!
YOU HAS FORKSED ME INTA BEHAVIOURING UNLIKE TH' FAMILIAR VALUES CELEBRICKY I YAM
LESSEN, FELLAS C'N Y'TAYKE IT OUTSIDE 2 I'VE JOOST WAXED TH' FLOORS, LIKE.
BWARR YEAH! LET'S STEP OUTSIDE I OWE YOU ONE!


WELL-- IF Y'COGGETS TH' ROAST BEEF SAN'WICH, WE KIN CALLS IT EVE-ING STEVE-ING!
ARF/ARF/ ARF/
PLUTO AND SQUINTEYE
PERSONABLE APPEERINKS
MIDSUMMARY EVE
GIT YER 'PLUTO AND SQUINTEYE' READS ARTY-GRAPHED (IF THEY LIKES TH' LOOKS O' TH' GRUB YA BRUNG 'EM)
WHEN THEY ARE FINISHKED EATIN' AS MUCH AS THEY WANT:
LEFTOVARIES FEAST FER EVRYONE ELTZ
FIRST COME, FIRST SERVIX!
THEY SAY Y'CAN TELL JOOST BY LOOKIN'...
SO WOT DO Y'RECKONEEZ DUNN?

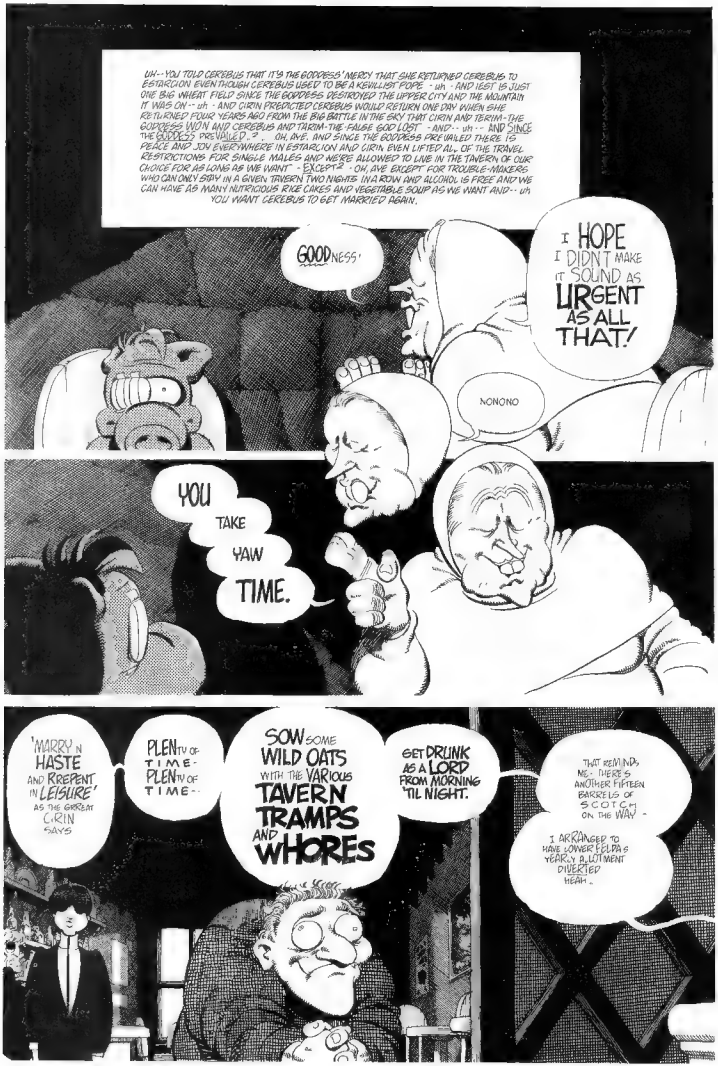
MMM...
E'S A WOTSIT-- A PEEPBEN TOM --- AN' AN EVESDROPPAH.
YEH, THESSNOT I THOTE. BOOT WHY ON'Y WOON?
'AVV ONEE ONE' WOT?
WOON EAR AN' WOON EYE?
POUND
POUND
HAHA
YEH- DR'E THOTE THE SECON' LINE ON THE EYE CHART SPELT 'HOOF DWAH'
HEH.
DUNNOW.
MEBBE 'E ONEE SAWR ONE TIT.
E'S NEE ENOOF, THOU'
YEH?
FUCK
OH, YEAH! PLEASE MAY SARABOOS AVANDOTHA SCOTCH?'
'THANK YOUFA TALIN' SARABOOS WHERETA PISS.'
'CEPTWHENEEZ DROONK AN' THANEEZA RIGHT SOD'N' NO MISTAKE A-BOUT IT..
PICKLED MOST O'TH' TOYMS, AYE?
NEAREZ I C'N RECKON EEZA 'TYOO DAYS PECKLED TYOO DAYS SOOFERIN' SOTE A LAD
TYDAYS WUNUNIZ DAYS OFF IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN.
SH. 'ERE 'E COOMS.
POUND
POUND

'MORNING, GUYS.
MORNIN'.
MOANEEN.
SO UH...
WHAT'S THE BIG DISCUSSION ABOUT?
WE WUZ TAWKEEN ABOU' YOW (AKSHULLY)-- AN' AS SOWN AS YOW GO BECK 'N' SIYDOWN...
WE C'N PICK ROIGHT UP WAY WE LEFT ORF.
AAAAA.
I THINK YUV VISI'Z FEELSEENZ.
WEWW, BOO FUEGIN' CO.
YEHBOOD TELL - TH' LEPPERELLAZ NEVADOON YOU ENNY?
BLOOODY HELL - SNATCHER'S COOMEN!

YOUWUZ SUPPOSETA BE KEEPIN' AN EYE OUT
'ARRISON.
AYE?
SNATCHUN'S COMEEN'.
OOD - THAT'S FOONEE, EENT IT?
THE ARSE'OLE FO'MAH'LY KNOWN AS FRINGE MICK!
A WITICISM FOOR EVRY OCCASION.
DRY WIT BY TH' BOTTLE OR GLASS
LINE FOMES TA TH' LEFT F'THESS MARDAP MASSTRON OF MURTH AN' MERRAMENT.
HA HA LY SOOPUH BAHSTID!
CLICK
KLAK
MORNIN' MIZZUZ THATCHER.
GOOD MORN ING.
HEV I THE PLEASURE OF ADDRESSING MISTER HARRRISON STARKEY? OR HIS BRUTHAH: MISTER RRICHARD GEO'GE?
I'M 'ARRISON, MIZZUZ T.
RICHARD'S TH' LITTLE FELLA ON THE END
ON THE END?
ON THE END OF WOT?
I'M SHORE I DON'KNOW
BOOT I'LL ASK 'IM WHEN 'E COOMS EN.
OW!..
YEH - AN' THESSIZ PRINCE
THATEZ chm— MISTAH
MISTAH PHILLIP MICHAELS.

SHE NOWZ 'OO OY AM.
HE'S--
ehm.
'EEZ JOOST PASSEN' THROUGH LIKE.
HOW VEDDY -- WISE OF YOU... MISTER MICHAELS.
YAHW LOOKING SPLENDID THISMAHNING, RRICHARD-- SIMPLY SPLENDID
YOUR HAIR NEEDS A GOOT CUTTING!
THANKYEW MIZZUZ T.
YAZZ, MIZZUZ T.
HOW EVAH!
NOW DON'T YOU MIND ME, YOU JUST RE TUHN TO YOUR CONVERSATION WITH YOAH....
YAZZ, MIZZUZ T.
"GENTLEMAN"
FRIEND

YOU SHANT EVEN KNOW I'M HEAH!
GOOD MORNING CEREBUS
GOOD MORNING MISUS THATCHER
NOW THEN DEAH
WHERE WERE WE?
FOOKEN 'ELL SHE'S STICKEN AROUND
SOW?
GOT UV GOT A MOUTH FOOL O GOB AN I CAN TAWALLOW WITH ME COLEAH DOON OOP
'AVE YOU CONSIDD'E'D GROWDENA PAIRUH TESTICKOES?
OOO CHATTER ON CHATTER ON AD LEAS I GET BETTAH FOOD THAN YOU DO.
YEA? EH? WOT?
LOTSA THENGS SMOKED 'AM TROOF LES SNEE? PUHTATUHS GAHLIC BREAD
BLOODY ELL
YOU THITH THATH O PURPOTHE
CARFOE, THERE PAHLIN' Y GETTEEN SPITTOE OLE OVAH Y POSH LITTOE NECKTIE
WHETHA THAPITHOON? WHETHA THAPITHOON?
WOT?
THAPITHOON
SPEA UP DEAH
CAN' UNNUHSTAN' A NUHO Y SAYIN'.)


UH-- YOU TOLD CEREBUS THAT IT'S THE GODDESS' MERCY THAT SHE RETURNED CEREBUS TO ESTARCION EVEN THOUGH CEREBUS USED TO BE A KEWLIST POPE - UH - AND LEST IS JUST ONE BIG WHEAT FIELD SINCE THE GODDESS DESTROYED THE UPPER CITY AND THE MOUNTAIN IT WAS ON -- uh - AND CIRIN PREDICTED CEREBUS WOULD RETURN ONE DAY WHEN SHE RETURNED FOUR YEARS AGO FROM THE BIG BATTLE IN THE SKY THAT CIRIN AND TERIM-THE GODDESS WON AND CEREBUS AND TARIM-THE FALSE GOD LOST - AND-- uh -- AND SINCE THE GODDESS PREVAILED ? -- OH, AYE, AND SINCE THE GODDESS PREVAILED THERE IS PEACE AND JOY EVERYWHERE IN ESTARCION AND CIRIN EVEN LIFTED ALL OF THE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS FOR SINGLE MALES AND WE'RE ALLOWED TO LIVE IN THE TAVERN OF OUR CHOICE FOR AS LONG AS WE WANT - EXCEPT ? - OH, AYE, EXCEPT FOR TROUBLE-MAKERS WHO CAN ONLY STAY IN A GIVEN TAVERN TWO NIGHTS IN A ROW AND ALCOHOL IS FREE AND WE CAN HAVE AS MANY NUTRICIOUS RICE CAKES AND VEGETABLE SOUP AS WE WANT AND-- uh YOU WANT CEREBUS TO GET MARRIED AGAIN.
GOODNESS!
I HOPE I DIDN'T MAKE IT SOUND AS URGENT AS ALL THAT!
NONONO
YOU TAKE YAW TIME.
'MARRY IN HASTE AND RREPENT IN LEISURE' AS THE GREAT CIRIN SAYS
PLENTY OF TIME- PLENTY OF TIME--
SOW SOME WILD OATS WITH THE VARIOUS TAVERN TRAMPS AND WHORES
GET DRUNK AS A LORD FROM MORNING 'TIL NIGHT.
THAT REMINDS ME-- THERE'S ANOTHER FIFTEEN BARRELS OF SCOTCH ON THE WAY -
I ARRANGED TO HAVE LOWER ELDRA'S YEARLY ALLOTMENT DIVERTED HEAH -

THANK YOU, MRS THATCHER
NOT AT ALL MY DEAR NOT AT ALL
WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT YOU WILL COME TO ONE OF OUR DANCES MMMM?
AND MEET A NICE GIRL.
OR
YOU CAN SIMPLY CON TINUE
DRINK ING YOUR SELF TO DEATH!
PAT PAT
THE CHOICE IS ENTIRELY YOURS TO MAKE
ISN'T IT?
MMMMM?
THAAAT'S RIGHT
AND I'M SURE YOU WILL
CAN I HELP YOU?
YES MISS
COULD YOU DIRECT ME TO THE ERM
STAR
CHILD
TAVERN

IT IS 'MISSUZ' --NOT 'MISS'. 'MISSUZ' THATCHUH
TURN RRIGHT WHEN YOU EXIT THESE PREMISES AND FOLLOW THE WALL.
THE STAR CHILD TAKERN IS ABOUT ONE KILOMETER AWAY
NOW! CEREBUS AS I WAS
MIGHT I RRENDUH ANY FURTHER ASSISTANCE?
YES MISS
WHICH ONE
WHICH WAY
IS
RRIGHT

IT IS 'MISSUZ' NOT 'MISS'.
'MISSUZ' THATCHUH
WHEN YOU EXIT THESE PREMISES
TURN IN THE DIRECTION OF YAW UP RAISED ARM.
DO~YOU~ UN~DER~ STAND.
YES, MISS
THANK YOU KINDLY I'M MUCH OBLIGED
MUCH OBLIGED NEED MISS
KU KLAK
KLAK
TEDDIBLY IMPORTANT SEE NG TO THE NEEDS OF THE INTE...LEC...UALLY DISADVANTAGED
OF COSS THEIR NAB..E TY TO COMPREHEND EVEN THE
TUNK TUNK TUNK

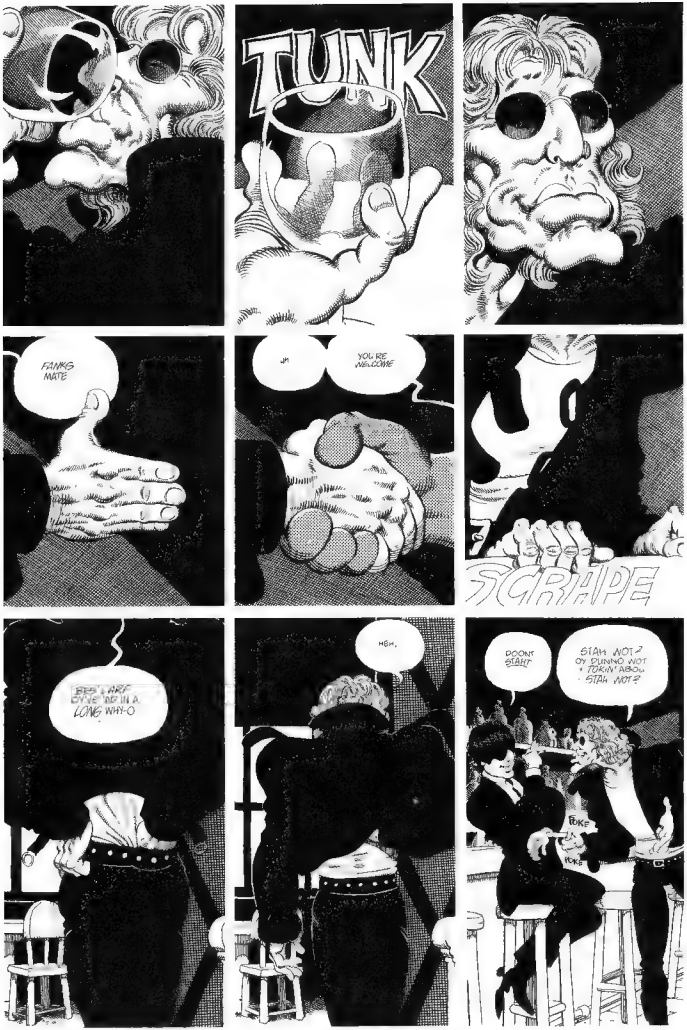
OH FOR THE LOVE OF—
HE IS GONE THE WRONG WAY.
WE WILL CONTINUE OUR CONVERSATION ANOTHER TIME CERBERUS, DEAR.
IF I AM UNABLE TO OVERTAKE THE WRETCHED, ADDLED CREATURE HE SHANT STOP UNTIL HE BREACHES THE SEA OF TACHNYA!
YOUNG MAN!
KLIP KLOP KLIP KLOP
KLIK KLAK KLAK
KLIP KLOP KLIP KLOP
YOUNG MAN!
SKELETALLY CHALLENGED YOUNG MAN!
HOO-HOO!

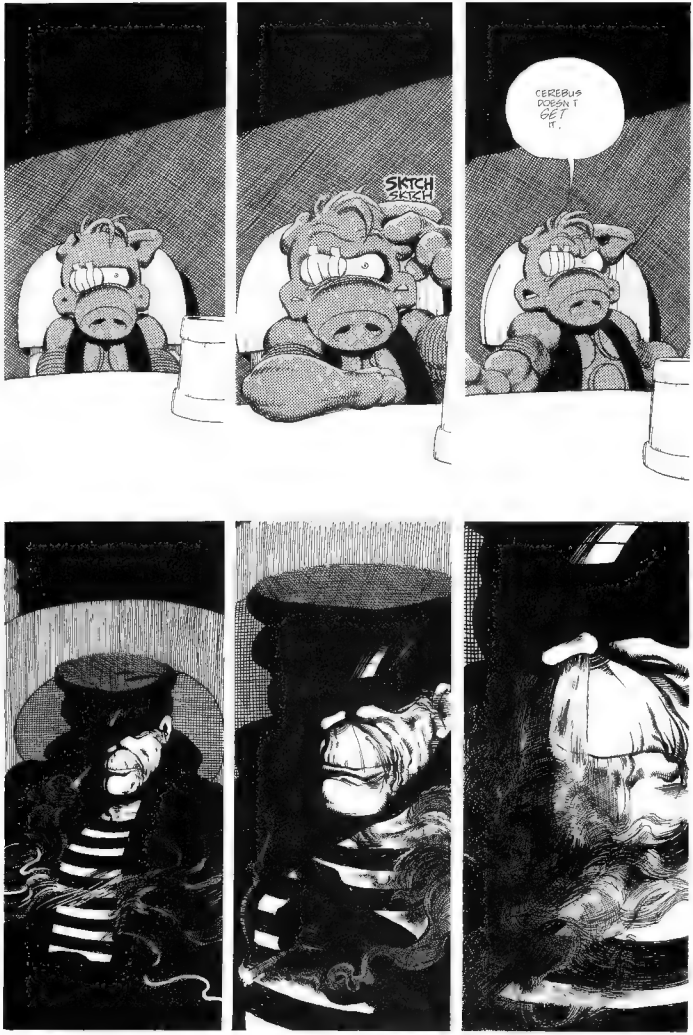
HARR GON?
YEH.
WHEN YOU GET A MINUTE CERBERUS WOULD _ KE AN ALE PLEASE
WE'LL TRY TA FET IT NTA MY SHELEVOIR
YUR IN LOCK
TH' TABLE F TWALVE I WOOZ EXPACTIN' NEVAH SHOWED OR?
THANK YOU
V'WALCOOM
YOU EVER GO TO ONE OF THESE
'DANCES'?
ME?
NAAHK
WHY NOT?
COOZ THEY MAKE YUH DANCE, DON THEY?

BAD ENOUF WHEN YOU COULD JOOGE IT ON ARTAIN CHACKIN OUT TH TALENT
TRICK'T F IGH..IM OUT WHICH LOOMPS IS WHEGE C ONDER THEM PTAUTH SACKS THEY WEAR
BOOT NOW WHAN YOU ARRIVE STRAIGHTAWAY YU GOT TO..
WOTTA WE TRIM' ABOU
(MOVE N' FOOT)
THE DANCES
THEY C WAYS PU TH YOUNG ONES NNA BACK
SON YOU AFTA RUN THE GAUN'LET O WRINKOED UP BEACHED WHALES I GET T THE TRIM
THE WHAT?
TH TRIM.. TH DOLLIES TH GASHES TH FINGUH PIES.
YOU 'NOW
OH!
UH
AYE
WHAT ABOUT THE TAVERN TRAMPS AND WHORES?

UH
MRS THATCHER SAID - CERBERUS SHOULD SOW SOME WILD OATS IN TH THE
uh
THE
FLUG.
ME.
OH, THASSA GOOD ONE THA VZ - -
'TAVUHN TRAMPS'?
AN'--AN' 'OORES!
O BLIMEY
O BLIMEY
'ERE WOTZAT SOUND? WOV OV DON BLEEVE IT S THE TAVUHN TRAMPS AN' OORES MAN MIKEEN' - S - WIKELY DUH V R!
OH MENNY DI'S WONT. THEN ARR SON?
THUMP
OHHH FLUG! STOPPIT! Y'KELLIN' ME!
Th TAVUHN TRAMPS ARE A BI' MOULD, TODAY - BUT JUS' CHECK THEM OORES' GAWAN AN' B.WEM A SQUEEZE AYE?
AYE? GAWAN.
GASP: FUGOFF GASP: FUGOFF
POKE
POKE

'ERE! WHEV 'A BOWEN THEM? YO AVEN'T EVEN LOOKED AT 'EM CRUMPETS - FACKIN' 'ELL MUANEEN, DAHLIN'!
NUFFINK. JUIK FRESH CRUMPET, AYE?
O GHOD
GEEP'S
O GHOD
GEEP'S
'E SEZ F'EV'RY CRUMPET Y'TIKE E'LL FROW IN A FREE TAHT!
WOTTAYUH SAY? CAN'T BEA' A DEAL LOIK THA' WIV A STICK, 'ARRISON...
CAN YOW?
MEH
YAHWN TRUMPS N' 'OORES'


TUNK
FANKS MATE
UH
YOU'RE WELCOME
SCRAPE
BES' LARST DYKE I'VE 'AD IN A LONG WAY-O
HEH.
BOONT STAH?
STAH NOT? OY DUNNO NOT + TORKIN' ABOU STAH NOT?
TORK
TORK


SKITCH SKITCH
CEREBUS DOESN'T GET IT.

memoir

WHY AN AARDVARK?

part two

'Hi, are you Harry?'

The date was Thursday, December 16, 1976. I had prevailed in my badgering of Harry Kremer and had the first (and only) REAL job I would ever have — sales clerk of the downstairs half of Now & Then Books. I didn't recognize her as the brunette from the convention at my high school (that realisation would come some weeks or months later). No, I was not Harry — could I help her in some way?

She and some friends were putting together a magazine like *Dark Shadows*, she said. Would Now & Then Books be interested in advertising in it or carrying copies for sale? Thinking she was referring to a cult horror/parody TV series of the time, I asked what sort of content she intended. 'Like *Dark Shadows*,' she insisted. Insight dawned.

'Do you mean *Dark Fantasy*?'

'Oh, right. *Dark Fantasy*.' She never missed a beat — a trait I would come to know well over the next few years. I kept her talking for a while, trying to get some picture of her level of expertise. It was pretty clear that she was a novice in the publishing world. I offered my own services in assisting her. After all, I (ahem) had been published in *Dark Fantasy*. That got her interest (a genuine first for me — interest from a female). She left me her name, address and phone number. I wrote down my own. Kind of exciting really, since I had had my own one-room apartment for all of sixteen days. I had sold all of my comic books for approximately two thousand dollars and took the job running the downstairs at Now & Then Books for seventy-five dollars a month and rented the apartment for $120 a month — it was 'freelance artist/writer sink-or-swim' time.

She recognized my name from *Dark Fantasy*.

She came by the store the next night around the same time to invite me over for dinner (she admitted later that she walked home thinking, 'What am I? Mary Tyler Moore? I don't cook dinner for people'). After dinner she pulled out a file with various stories and poems spilling from it. The 'friends' turned out to be her brother Michael and her sister Karen. A family friend, Eric Hope, was the only artist in the writing group. To my delight, I found out he had little or no artistic ability. With the methodical efficiency of a would-be suitor seeing his expertise (however limited) as a trump card in the game of romance, I began taking control of the magazine as a means of ingratiating myself to Denise Loubert de Neuilly (the 'de Neuilly' was an affectation of sorts; Michael had done some research on the origins of the family name and had determined that it had originated in Neuilly, France).

It was an unexpected switch for me to go from being a marginal presence at *Dark Fantasy*, a largely unpublished 'wannabe', and to find myself a kind of final authority on creative, production and business matters on *Cerebus*. That was the name of Denise Loubert's proposed magazine: *Cerebus*.

Early in 1977, I designed a logo and did an illustration for the front cover. The logo appeared on the first fifty issues of this comic book you're reading now. When I was done, there was something missing. I told Deni that she needed a name for the publishing imprint. *Dark Fantasy* was the name of Gene Day's publication, but it also had the imprint name and logo of his publishing company: House of Shadows. She thought about it for a while and decided to solicit Michael and Karen's input.

Michael's suggestion was 'Vanaheim Press'. I think he made the name up. It had the nordic ring of Valhalla or Midheim or whatever else. I always took it to be synonymous with Valhalla — a mythological place where good and dutiful warriors go.

Karen's suggestion was 'Aardvark Press'. There was that damned quadruped again. It seemed that in her circle of friends a passing fancy had consisted of resting finger and thumb tips on surface and then raising the middle finger from the surface: four legs and an elongated snout — aardvark.

Having aspirations to become part of the family in the not-too-distant future (don't laugh — it had taken me twenty years to find a girlfriend and I wasn't about to risk having to wait another twenty years for the next one), I wasn't going to play favourites and suggested combining the two names: Aardvark-Vanaheim Press.

I have no memory of drawing the first picture of the aardvark mascot. I was doing so much freelance work (both commissioned and on spec) that the work I did for my girlfriend's magazine was more of a hobby, an afterthought to the day's work. I only did the one version ('A Boy and His Aardvark' was still fresh in my mind, so I don't think I even referred to the little picture in the dictionary): a cartoon barbarian aardvark (in keeping with the fantasy theme intended for the magazine). I probably knocked it out in about twenty minutes with an extra thirty seconds for the tone

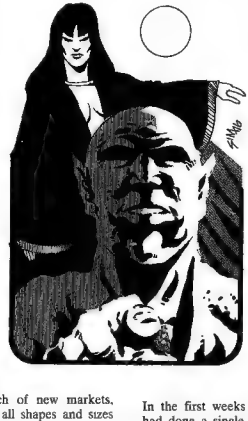
As the first issue started to come together, it was Deni who realised that the fanzine's title, *Cerebus,* was misspelled. The three-headed dog who guarded Hades in Greek mythology was Cerberus. 'Not to worry,' I said, somewhat less than eager to reletter the logo and figure out how to squeeze in an extra letter and transpose two others, 'we'll just say that *Cerebus* is the name of the cartoon aardvark mascot.'

The fanzine was never published. The originals and a cheque for (I believe) $175 were sent to an address in California of a Deep Discount quick printer. The magazine and the money vanished without a trace.

Of course, when something like that happens, it doesn't happen right away. I recall the optimism and anticipation of the arrival of the printed first issue gradually giving way to anxiety, then anger and finally resignation. Subsequent issues were left half-finished. The awareness that a magazine like *Dark Fantasy* operated in the red, financed by Gene's freelance paychecks, and that *Cerebus* would be lucky to break even in some distant future — that in fact it would be lucky to lose only a few thousand dollars over the first several years — such awareness, coupled with the loss of the cheque and the originals, dashed the original dream on the rocks of hard truth.

Above: the original drawing of the aardvark mascot. Facing page: original illustration for the cover of the Cerebus *digest-zine*

And it was not just Deni Loubert's dream of making a living from a digest-zine 'like *Dark Shadows*' which had been dealt a blow. Gene Day had started getting more freelance work from Marvel Comics as an inker on *Star Wars, Marvel Two-in-One* and other titles. *Dark Fantasy* took a back seat to this job, which would pay his not-inconsiderable mortgage on his new house on First St. in Gananoque *Hellhound*, his long-planned magazine-format comics anthology, was dead in the water. *Pigeons from Hell*, a Robert E. Howard short story for which he had purchased the rights from the Howard estate to do as a comics adaptation, languished as well. His logic was irrefutable. Every hour spent at the drawing board inking Marvel super-hero comics solidified his reputation as a reliable finisher — which garnered him still more work. Every hour spent on *Dark Fantasy*, or *Hellhound*, brought him closer to the day when he would have to pay a printing bill, pay the contributors and trust to the unlikely possibility that there would be a profit left over. His experience as a publisher told him that the profit would be insufficient to pay for the printing of the next issue. As a hobby, in Gene's mind, the satisfaction had to be weighed in the balance against the money and time it consumed. As a livelihood, it was a treadmill to oblivion.



My perception of Gene began to change. I had imitated his 'hell-bent for leather' approach to freelancing — swimming like a shark in search of new markets, inundating editors and publishers of all shapes and sizes with work produced on spec, taking my acceptance by publishers A and B and using it as a crowbar to pry an assignment out of publisher C. I had pursued the 'small press' opportunity presented to me by Deni Loubert and her magazine *Cerebus* to mirror Gene's efforts with *Dark Fantasy*. As a freelancer I was experiencing far greater success than I could have imagined. In talking to Gene, I recognized that *Cerebus* was not going to be a money-maker — either for its publisher or her boyfriend-layout-paste-up-design-illustration guy. The question became one of 'where to from here?' If I was to continue following in Gene's footsteps, I had to build my freelance career with smaller publishers and attempt to interest someone at Marvel or DC in using me as a writer (my greatest 'strength', as perceived by editors and publishers), layout artist (my second greatest strong suit), penciller (unlikely) or inker (impossible). In visiting Gene, the first rush of seeing actual Marvel Comics pencilled pages in my friend and mentor's studio gave way to the disheartening awareness of the crippling workload, Gene's new status as a small cog in the Big Machine. Even more disheartening was seeing the full-size photocopies of the finished pages and comparing them to their published incarnation — most of Gene's brushwork and attention to detail languishing beneath pools of magenta, crimson, navy and orange — each page a riot of chromatic inconsistencies.

For my part, my most lucrative jobs in 1977 were *Revolt: 2000* — a quartet of super-hero stories I had written and drawn as a commissioned work from the long-departed and never-lamented Irjax Enterprises — and *Phantacea*'s first issue, drawn from a full script by Jim McPherson. As much as I thought that Gene had taken a wrong turn with his Marvel freelancing, I was left contemplating my own situation — doing second-rate imitations of the (even then) formulaic Marvel style at a fraction of the Big Two's page rates and for publishers who could only muster a fraction of Marvel's or DC's circulation

In the first weeks after creating the aardvark mascot, I had done a single comic-book panel — just to see what he would look like from a different angle. Some months later, after the loss of the originals and printing bill for *Cerebus* No. 1, the digest-zine, I drew a sample page, incorporating the original logo. It sat on a shelf in my studio in Deni's and my first apartment — 48 Weber Street East — through the spring and summer of 1977, as I completed *Phantacea* No 1 (including a two-week period where I was confined to bed with a virus resembling mononucleosis).

Next: Mr. and Mrs. Aardvark-Vanaheim.

preview

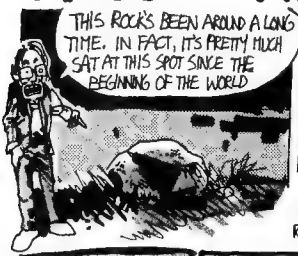
SHMOG

Hey! Here's one that's going to be easy on your wallets and pocketbooks, folks — Greg McCann's *SHMOG*. See, the first issue is dated April 1995, which means that you might have to buy — oh — one or two of them a year, tops. I just picked it up at Now & Then Books on a recent shopping trip. It had a weird cover that sort of reminded me of the old Jaxon underground comics: weird mix of tone and colour. So, Harry tells me that it's local — I mean, it's done by a guy right here in town. But that's not why I'm buying it (y'understand) — I was already buying it because of the cover.

Well, I think it's really funny. I laughed a few times while I was reading it. Some of it's pretty gross, but it's definitely from the 'joke 'em if they can't take a fuck' school of comedy. The drawing isn't the most professional in the world and... and... sometimes the lettering is hard to read. So maybe I don't want to do a Preview of it. I mean, the last thing I need is people saying 'Jeez, what happened to Dave? Usually he has such at-least-average taste.' Maybe — maybe I'm really going to hurt my reputation here. Shit. Wait a minute, WHAT reputation? Everyone thinks I'm an asshole, anyway.

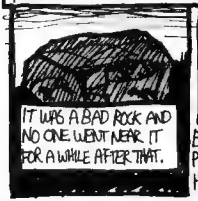
Without further ado, Greg McCann's *SHMOG* (and if you want to know what shmog is, it's on the inside back cover and back cover of Greg's first issue). $3.00 Canadian, $2.50 U.S. from Greg McCann's Itchy Eyeball Comix, Box 31055, 25 Frederick St., Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2H 6M0.

THIS HERE ROCK



A LOT OF RAIN FELL ON IT AND A LOT OF BIRDS SHIT ON IT AND A LOT OF ANIMALS STRETCHED OUT ACROSS THE ROCK TO SLEEP IN THE SUN AND IT WAS HERE THE WHOLE TIME.

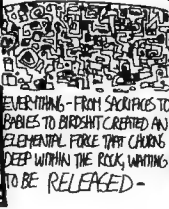
ONE DAY SOME REALLY MESSED UP FOLKS STARTED SACRIFICING SMALL ANIMALS OVER THE ROCK. PRETTY SOON THEY MOVED ON TO PEOPLE AND THEN SOME REALLY CRAZY SHIT WENT DOWN. THE ROCK SOAKED UP ALL THE BLOOD AND THE DARK KARMA FROM THE ACTS THAT HAD BEEN COMMITTED ON IT.



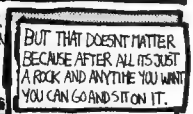
ONCE A MAN CLIMBED ONTO THE ROCK, STRIPPED DOWN AND JUMPED INTO THE NEARBY RIVER, SWIMMING OFF INTO THE NIGHT. HE NEVER RETURNED AND THE ELEMENTS CLAIMED HIS ABANDONED CLOTHES.

ANOTHER TIME A BABY WAS BORN ON THE ROCK. (DIFFERENT KID)

THE ROCK ABSORBED POWER FROM EVERYTHING THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE OVER ITS SURFACE.



EVERYTHING - FROM SACRIFICES TO BABIES TO BIRDSHIT CREATED AN ELEMENTAL FORCE THAT LAYED DEEP WITHIN THE ROCK, WAITING TO BE RELEASED -



ALL OUR LIVES WE **WONDER** WE **PRAY** AND WE GET MORE AND MORE **CONFUSED**. WELL **NO MORE** ITS TIME TO GET THE STORY **STRAIGHT**. THE STORY ABOUT-

GOD THE LOSER

GO AWAY LARRY
BUT GOD MAN I LIKE YOU MAN YOU GIVE ME A WARM TINGLY FEELING ALL OVER
NICE FUCKIN PANTS
SO... WATCHA WORKIN ON THERE?

CHECK IT OUT... ALL THESE SOLAR SYSTEMS, STARS AND PLANETS AND... LOOK AT THE LITTLE BLUE PLANET, LOOK AT AAAALL THOSE PEOPLE AND... HEY, HEY THAT GUYS JERKING OFF!!

YOU WEREN'T KIDDING WHEN YOU SAID YOU MADE THEM IN YOUR OWN IMAGE! BUNCH OF WANKIN FOOLS MAH YER UNIVERSE'S FUCKED
SHUT UP SHUT UP SHUT UP
YO MAN DONT GET TESTY WITH ME! I JUST MIGHT STOMP THE FUCK OUTTA YOUR STUPID UNIVERSE MAN!
YOU CANT DO THAT LARRY. YOU KNOW THAT. YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT TO ME BUT YOU CANT TOUCH MY UNIVERSE
GOD FEARS
YEAH I GUESS YER RIGHT
BIF!
GEEK! LOSER! FOOL!
SHIT! THIS REALLY SUCKS! NOTHING BUT AGGRAVATION! I THOUGHT THAT BY MAKING THIS UNIVERSE, THE OTHER KIDS WOULD LIKE ME AND THINK I'M COOL. BUT, IT JUST DOESN'T SEEM TO BE WORKING OUT AT ALL...
I DUNNO... I GUESS I FIGURED THOSE HUMAN FOLKS DOWN THERE WOULDVE AMOUNTED TO SOMETHING BY NOW... INSTEAD THEY SPEND ALL THEIR TIME...
WELL, JERKING OFF!
WELL I JUST GOTTA HAVE FAITH IN THE LITTLE GUYS... SOMEDAY THEY'LL PULL SOMETHING OFF THAT'LL IMPRESS EVERYONE AND THEN I'LL HAVE FRIENDS AND EVERYONE WILL LIKE ME AND I'LL FINALLY BE HAPPY

GEEK
CHUMP
LUCKHEAD
LOSER
FOOL
JERK
SHIT
TWIT
DORK
ASSHOLE
TAKE A DOLLAR OUT OF YOUR PURSE
GODS SELLING HIS UNIVERSE
YEAH THATS A REALLY NICE UNIVERSE YOU HAVE THERE GOD
TEACHERS LOUNGE
NOW GO OUT AND PLAY ITS RECESS
LATER:
MAN I THOUGHT SCHOOL WOULD NEVER END! NOW ITS JUST ME AND MY UNIVERSE
C'MON GUYS..! WHATS GOING ON WITH YOU DOWN THERE? IM COUNTING ON YOU ALL C'MON!
MEANWHILE, DOWN ON EARTH...
GOD SHOW ME THE LIGHT
LORD, WE ASK OF YOUR STRENGTH AND GUIDANCE
LORD GOD I BESEECH THEE
AND BLESS MOMMA AND BLESS DADDA AND BLESS MY DOLL BINKY
PLEASE
LORD
HARE HARE
TESTIFY!
C'MON GUYS IM PULLING FOR YA! I KNOW YOU'LL COME THROUGH FOR ME ITS JUST A MATTER OF TIME! -HEY, CAN YOU EVEN HEAR ME DOWN THERE? HELLO..? AAWW C'MON MAN I NEED YOU TO HELP ME OUT HERE
SO WHY IS GOD SUCH A LOSER?
WELL LOOK AT WHO HE PRAYS TO..!
ITS NEVER OVER!

THE ANSWER:
OKAY NOW WHAT YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF IS: "HOW MUCH DO I WANT TO DRIVE? AM I WILLING TO SHOW THE COMMITMENT, TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO SPEND-"
UNCLE BRIAN'S USED CAR
THE SUCKER
JUST SHOW ME A FUCKIN CAR
AHH STRAIGHT TO THE POINT- I LIKE THAT- IN FACT, I LIKE YOU AND THATS WHY IM GONNA GIVE YOU THIS HERE DEAL
THE SALESMAN
SHE'S A BEAUT, AINT SHE? AND FOR YOU, WELL... CAUSE I LIKE YOU AND EVERYTHING... FOR YOU... FOU-FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS
THE CAR
THE MONEY
B-BUT WHAT HAS THIS TO DO WITH MY ETERNAL SOUL ???
THE CAR
NOT MUCH
THE DYING BRAIN
THE TREE
HOW MANY TIMES I GOTTA TELL YOU? NO TEST DRIVES
FUCK

HEY MAN, ITS LIKE... SOMETIMES WE ALL JUST NEED TO LET LOOSE AND

LAUGH OUR DAMN HEADS OFF!!

OK GO!
FFGMMGPF HEE HEE
PLEASE HERE PLEASE
MMEEHEEE HAHA HA HOOE!
TEE HEE
GIGGLE
PLEASE HERE I WANT
WAHAA HA HA HEEE HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HO HA
PLEASE HERE I WANT PLEASE
HAHAHA HAHEEHA HOO HAH
HAHA HA HA HA HA
HAHA HA HA HA HA HA
HA
HA

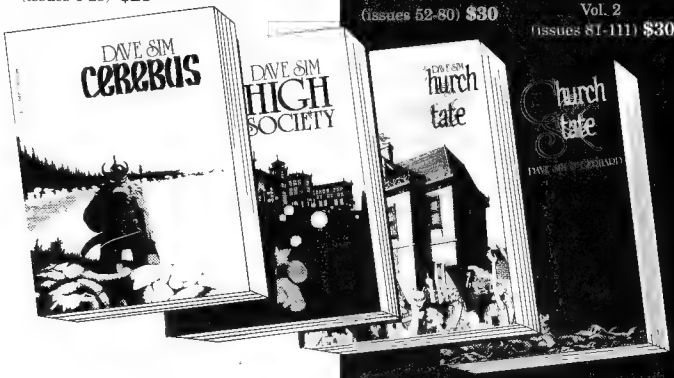
HAHA
HA
HA HA
HA HA
HA HAHA
HA HA
OKAY, ALRIGHT
THATS ENOUGH, PULL YOURSELVES TOGETHER NOW, ITS TIME TO GET BACK TO REALITY, OK?
RIGHT..!
GIGGLE MMFF
AHEM
...HUH!
AHEM
SCUZE ME
DANK OF SH
WAIT HERE
HONK
HONK
GODDAM MOVE IT
HONK
GIMME DA FUCKIN MONEY
BUT I DONT HAVE-URRK!
STAB!
WHERE MY SUPPER BITCH
WAR DEATH STARVATION
F SHMO
WHADDYA MEAN MY ACCOUNTS FROZEN?
THERE! NOW DONT YOU FEEL BETTER! ARENT YOU GLAD YOU PARTICIPATED
ITS GOOD FOR WHAT AILS YA!
PING PING PING

Cerebus
(issues 1-25) **$25**

High Society
(issues 26-50) **$25**

Church & State
Vol. 1
(issues 52-80) **$30**

Church & State
Vol. 2
(issues 81-111) **$30**



Jaka's Story
(issues 114-136)
$25

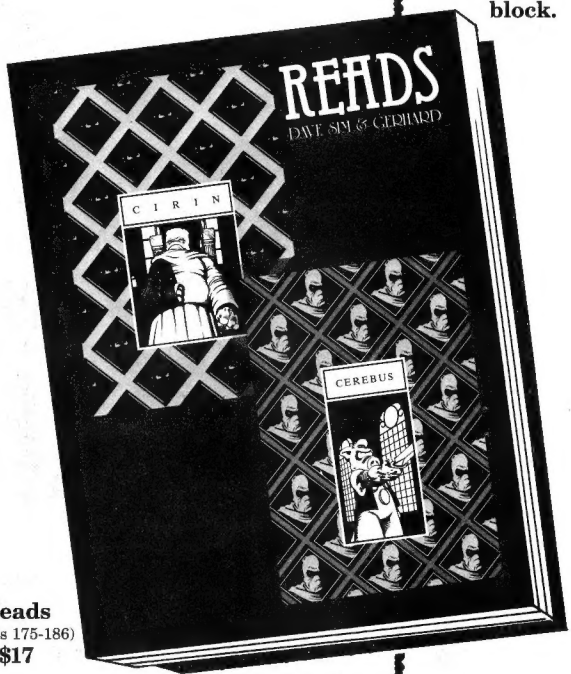
Melmoth
(issues 139-150)
$17

Flight
(issues 151-162)
$17

Women
(issues 163-174)
$17

CEREBUS NUMBER ZERO (reprinting the 'in-between' stories from Cerebus 51, 112/113 and 137-138) ($2.25)

There's a new kid on the block.



Reads
(issues 175-186)
$17

519-576-0955 (Fax Orders) **PHONE ORDERS** (Visa and Mastercard) **519-576-7820** or **519-576-0610**

- or send cheque/money order to -

Aardvark Vanaheim Inc., P.O. Box 1674, Station C, Kitchener, Ontario N2G 4R2

Please include your name, address, daytime phone number, Visa or Mastercard number & expiration date and name on the card.

Please add $3.00 per book postage and handling. Canadian customers please add 7% G.S.T.

An important message from Larry Welz:

FUCK CENSORSHIP!

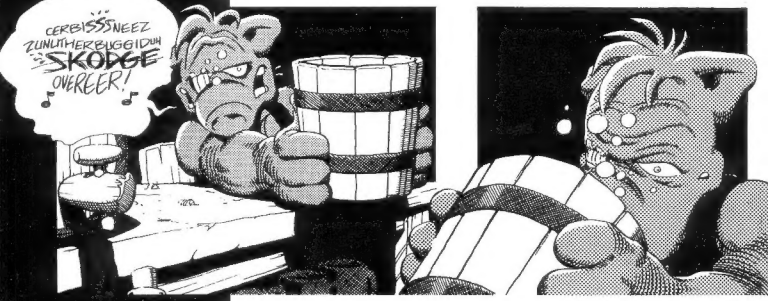
SUPPORT THE COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

All over the country, stores that carry Cherry *and other adult comix are getting busted for letting grown-ups read what they damn well please. The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund is there to stop the Fun Police from putting law-abiding retailers out of business and telling you what you're allowed to think. Support the books you want to read! Uphold the Constitution! Do the right thing! Deduct it from your taxes!*

Send lots of money to: CBLDF, P.O. Box 693, Northampton, MA 01061

GREEZONS SEATINGS!
C&D
RUM

finally...



there is an organisation for the promotion of comic books by, for and about alcoholics . . . an organisation that is taking its message to a demographic group too often ignored in our medium's history . . . an organisation which reminds alcoholics that a Friends of Jilly comic book (Very Vicky, Bacchus, Cerebus) costs less than a large draught or a shot of premium liquor . . . an organisation that raises awareness among alcoholics that there are comic books tailored to their special needs and interests . . . Friends of Jilly members and supporting members promote Friends of Jilly comic books to the alcoholic community in a way that shows we care . . . 'last time I looked, pally, we had rights too, y'know?' . . .

remember, you don't have to be a full-blown alcoholic to be a Friend of Jilly . . . even 'social drinkers' are welcome to participate . . . all you have to do is buy a drink for a Friend of Jilly or yourself at any licensed establishment and make a passing reference to comic books and you are considered a member in good standing . . . buy a round of drinks for a table consisting of three or more comics professionals (creators, retailers or parasites) and qualify instantly for Platinum Membership. Just ask one of the professionals to write 'Platinum Member' on a cocktail napkin . . . and carry it with you wherever you go.

Welcome home. 'To the Friends of Jilly.

FRIENDS of JILLY
since earlier this year sometime